

THE CALL OF DUTY



SCOOP DONOVAN !

**WAR
CAMERAMAN**



WHEREVER THERE WAS DANGER—WHEREVER THE THUNDER OF WAR WAS LOUDEST—WHEREVER THERE WAS VIVID ACTION...

SCOOP DONOVAN WAS THERE !

ACE OF WAR CAMERAMEN, SCOOP RECORDED EVENTS WHICH ROCKED NATIONS AND WROTE A CRIMSON RECORD OF VALOUR AND HEROISM.

ON THE BEACH-HEADS—IN THE AIR—AND ACROSS THE WAR-TORN OCEANS...

SCOOP DONOVAN WAS IN THE THICK OF IT TO BRING BACK THRILL-PACKED PICTURES TO **YOU !**

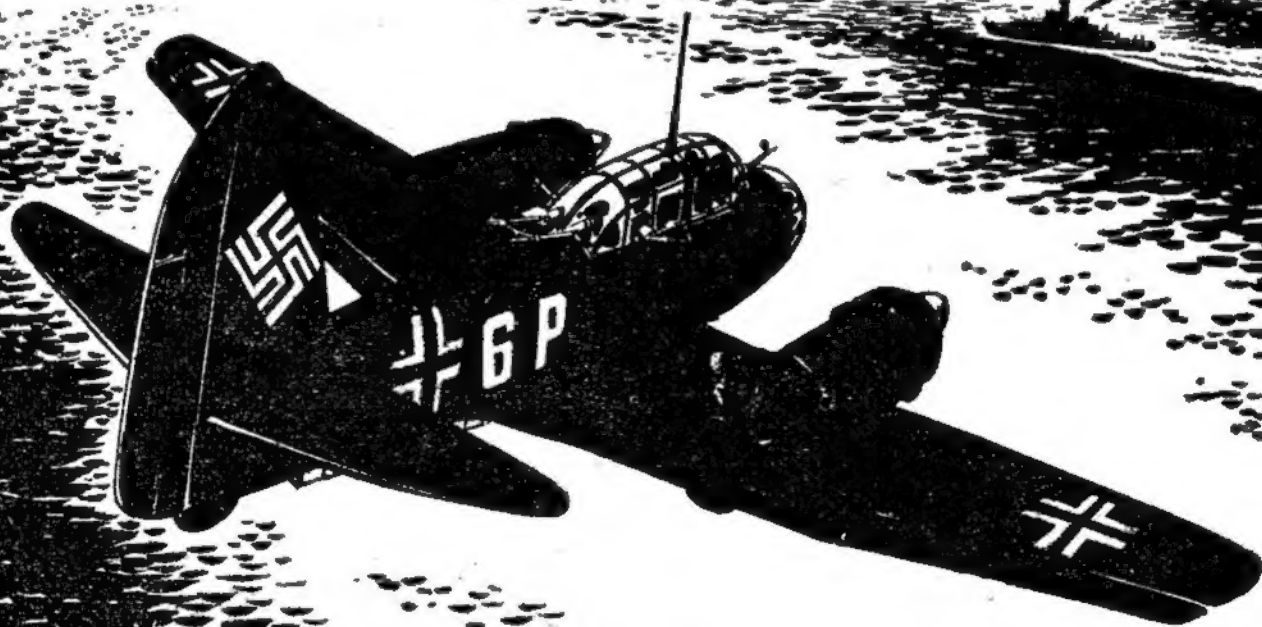
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THE CALL OF DUTY

1942. THE BATTLE IN THE NARROW BLUE WATERS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN WAS REACHING A STORMY CLIMAX AS THE EIGHTH ARMY GRAPPLED WITH ROMMEL'S AFRIKA KORPS IN THE WESTERN DESERT. DAY AFTER LURID DAY, THE MALTA CONVOYS BLASTED THEIR WAY THROUGH TO THE EMBATTLED ISLAND. THE ENEMY WAS MERCILESS ... AND WATCHFUL ...



Chapter 1.

FIGHTING FRIGATE

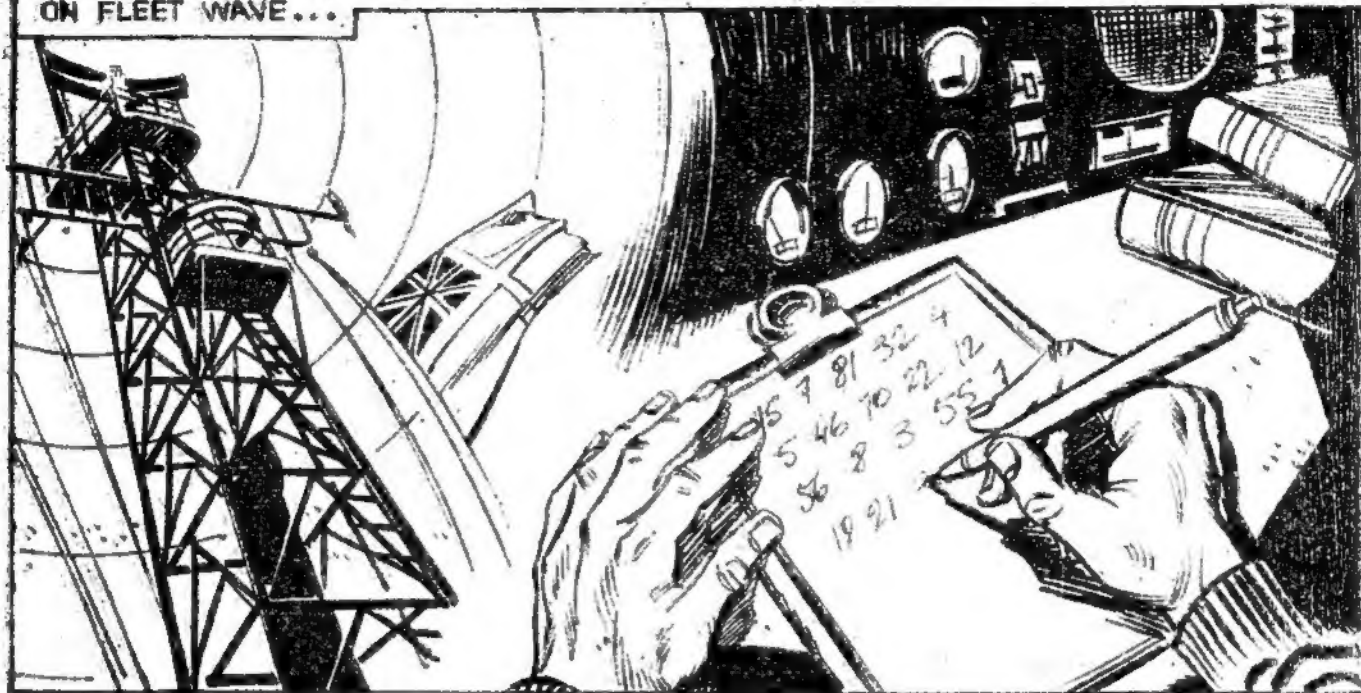
IN THOSE DESPERATE DAYS, DEATH CAME SUDDENLY TO UNSUSPECTING MEN FROM THE DEPTHS OF A CALM BLUE SEA OR THE PEACEFUL CLOUDS IN A SUNLIT SKY. IT WAS ABOUT TO COME TO THE FRIGATE H.M.S. WHIP...



THE WHIP, 1495 TONS, ARMED WITH SIX FOUR-INCH DUAL-PURPOSE GUNS, WAS ON ANTI-SUBMARINE PATROL IN THE WESTERN APPROACHES TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. SHE WAS ALONE.



FOR FIVE DAYS THE FRIGATE HAD PATROLLED, HER LOOKOUTS SCANNING AN EMPTY SKY, HER ASDIC PLUMBING THE SILENT SEA. ON THE SIXTH DAY, A CODED WIRELESS MESSAGE WITH *WHIP*'S CALL SIGN ALERTED THE TELEGRAPHIST LISTENING-OUT ON FLEET WAVE...



THE YEOMAN OF SIGNALS TOOK THE MESSAGE OVER THE BRIDGE VOICE-PIPE AND HANDED IT TO THE *WHIP*'S SKIPPER, LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER JOHN POWYS.

PROCEED TO GIB, EH? MUST BE A MALTA CONVOY FORMING. PLOT A COURSE, WILL YOU, PILOT? I'LL WANT YOU IN MY DAY-CABIN, NUMBER ONE!

AYE AYE, SIR!



The Call of Duty

PROCEED TO GIBRALTAR! THE WORDS HAD AN OMINOUS RING, FOR FROM THAT ROCKY FORTRESS SAILED THE ILL-FATED MALTA CONVOYS! WATCHFUL EYES ON THE WHIP'S DECK SAW THE SIGNS OF ACTIVITY ON THE BRIDGE.

STOP IT, MITCH!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED
TO BE FELL-IN!

WHAT'S
THE BUZZ,
YEO?



ABLE-SEAMAN JOHN MITCHELL WAS ALWAYS READY TO LISTEN - OR EVEN START - A 'BUZZ' OR RUMOUR!

A REFIT, PORKY,
THAT'S WHAT
IT IS! GOOD
OLD POMPEY,
HERE I COME!

YOU AND YOUR REFITS,
MITCH! YOU'VE BEEN GIVING
US THAT FOR TWO YEARS AND
WE AIN'T BEEN TIED UP ALONG-
SIDE MORE'N TWO DAYS THE
WHOLE TIME!



WHIP HAD BEEN IN CONSTANT ACTION ON FOREIGN STATIONS SINCE HER COMMISSIONING AT PORTSMOUTH TWO YEARS BEFORE... AND SOON HER GUNS WOULD BE SCREAMING AGAIN!

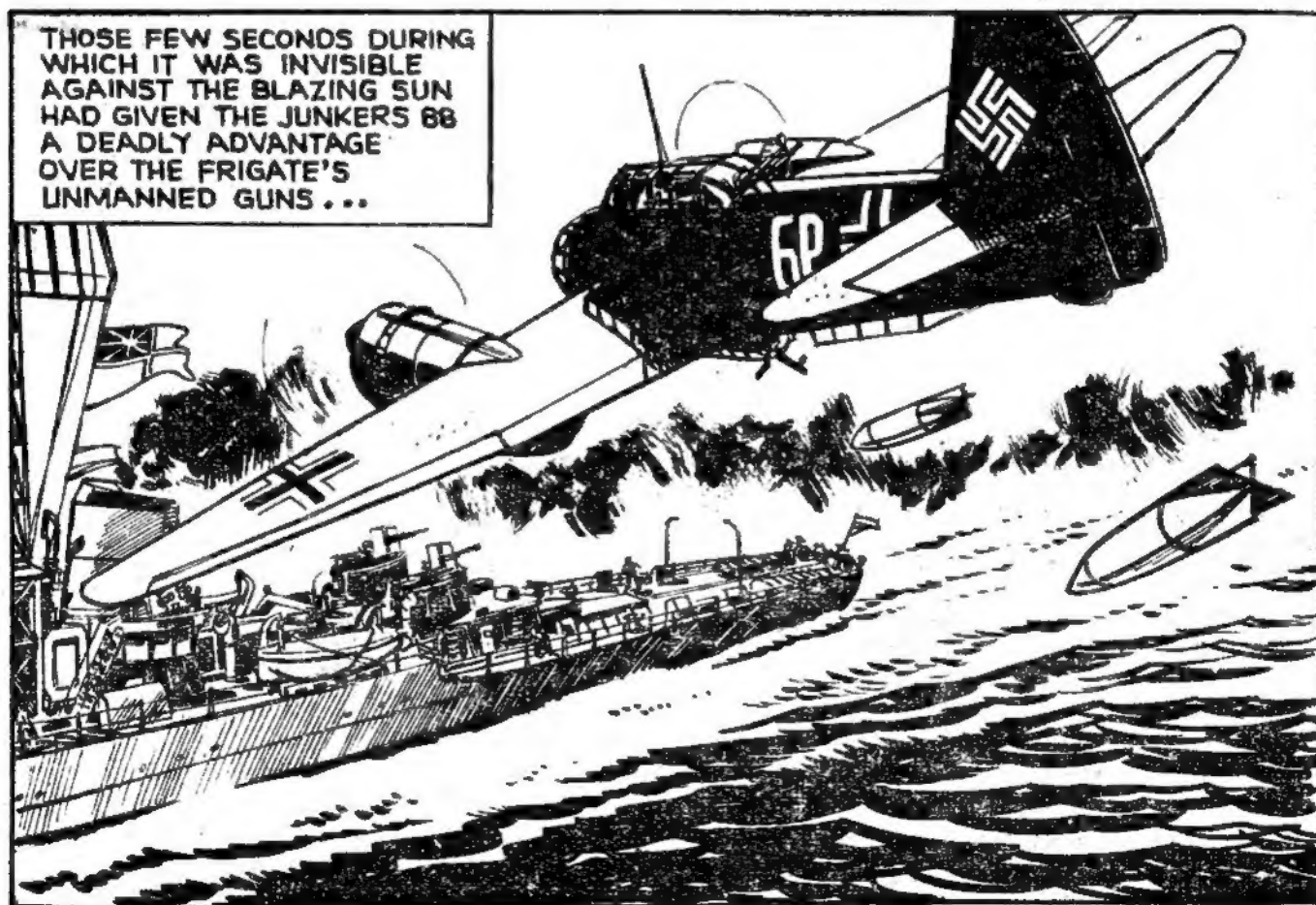
AIRCRAFT!
STARBOARD
BEAM!



THE GERMAN BOMBER HAD MANOEUVRED STEALTHILY INTO THE SUN. NOW, ENGINES BEATING, IT DIVED FEROCIOUSLY ON THE LONE FRIGATE...



THOSE FEW SECONDS DURING WHICH IT WAS INVISIBLE AGAINST THE BLAZING SUN HAD GIVEN THE JUNKERS 88 A DEADLY ADVANTAGE OVER THE FRIGATE'S UNMANNED GUNS...



AS MITCH RACED TO HIS POST AT THE STARBOARD OERLIKON GUN WITH PORKY CLOSE BEHIND HIM, THE FIRST BOMBS FELL...

DOWN, PORKY!



THE WHIP SHOOK AS A BOMB STRUCK HOME AMIDSHIPS. LOOKING BACK, THE DAZED PORKY SAW A CRUMPLED FIGURE ON THE REEKING DECK...

TEDDY'S STOPPED A PACKET!

COME ON, PORKY! WE'VE GOT TO GET THE SWINE WHO DID IT!



MITCH'S VOICE WAS HARD AND BITTER BUT EVEN AS HE REACHED HIS GUN, THE GERMAN AIRCRAFT CLIMBED STEEPLY AWAY AND OUT OF RANGE.

COME BACK, YOU LOUSY SWABS!



INSIDE THE JUNKERS' COCKPIT, THE PILOT WAS EXULTANT. THE WEAK AND ERRATIC FIRE FROM THE BRITISH FRIGATE HAD EMBOLDENED HIM. HE BANKED SHARPLY AND GRINNED AT HIS CO-PILOT...

WE GIVE THE ENGLISH ANOTHER SHAKING, EH, KURT? THEIR GUNNERS ARE DEMORALISED!

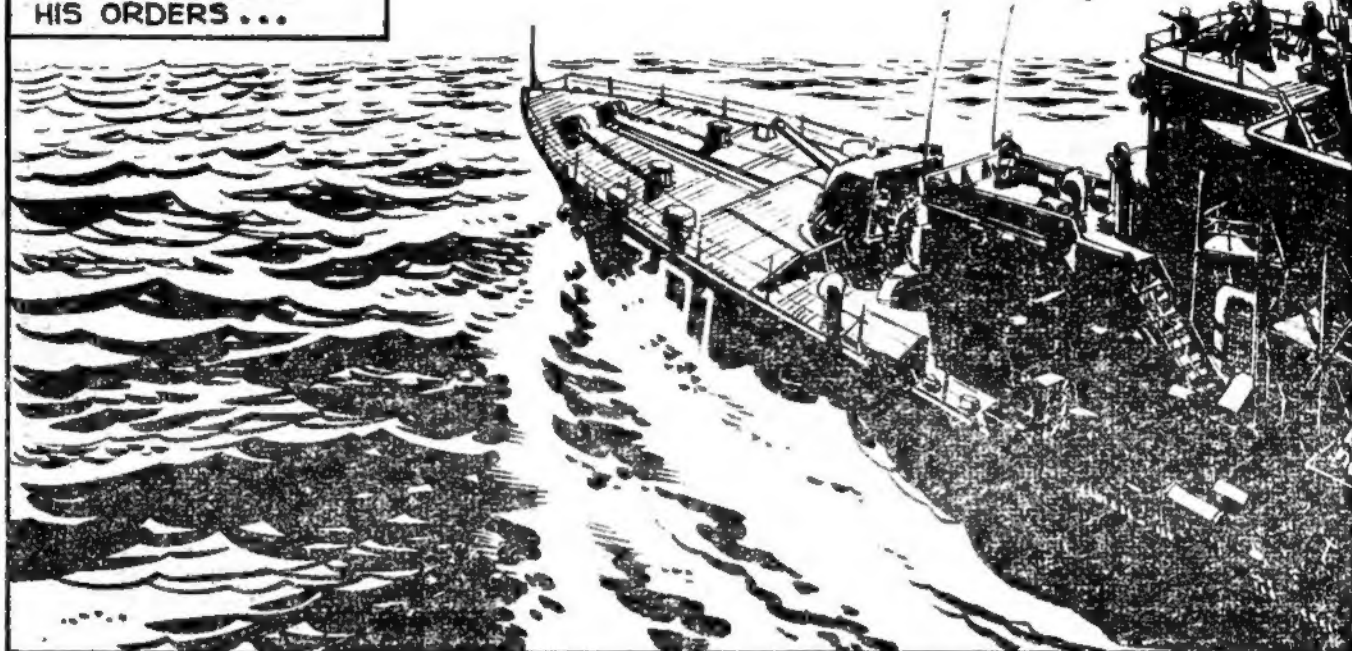


The Call of Duty

ON THE WHIP, THEY SAW THE JUNKERS 88 TURN AND HEAD TOWARDS THEM AGAIN. THE SKIPPER HAD REACHED THE BRIDGE NOW. COOLLY HE GAVE HIS ORDERS...

THE JERRY'S COMING BACK, SIR!

WHO'S ON THE STARBOARD OERLIKON? MITCHELL? GOOD! HARD A-PORT, COX'N!



MITCH'S DEADLY ACCURACY WITH THE OERLIKON WAS A BYWORD ON THE WHIP, AND THE FRIGATE'S NEW COURSE WOULD BRING THAT LETHAL ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN TO BEAR ON THE COCKSURE GERMAN AIRCRAFT...

WE'RE TURNING TO PORT, MITCH! THE OLD MAN'S GIVING YOU FIRST SMACK AT THE JERRY!

I'M READY FOR HIM!



The Call of Duty

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SETTLING HIMSELF AGAINST THE STRAP, MITCH EASED THE BARREL LEFT AND RIGHT, GETTING THE FEEL OF THE SMOOTH AND HEAVY GUN UNDER HIS HANDS. HE WAS QUITE COOL NOW... VICIOUSLY COOL...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MITCH? THE JERRY'S COMING IN LIKE THE CLAPPERS... WHY ISN'T HE FIRING?

YOU LEAVE IT TO MITCH, LOFTY. HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING!

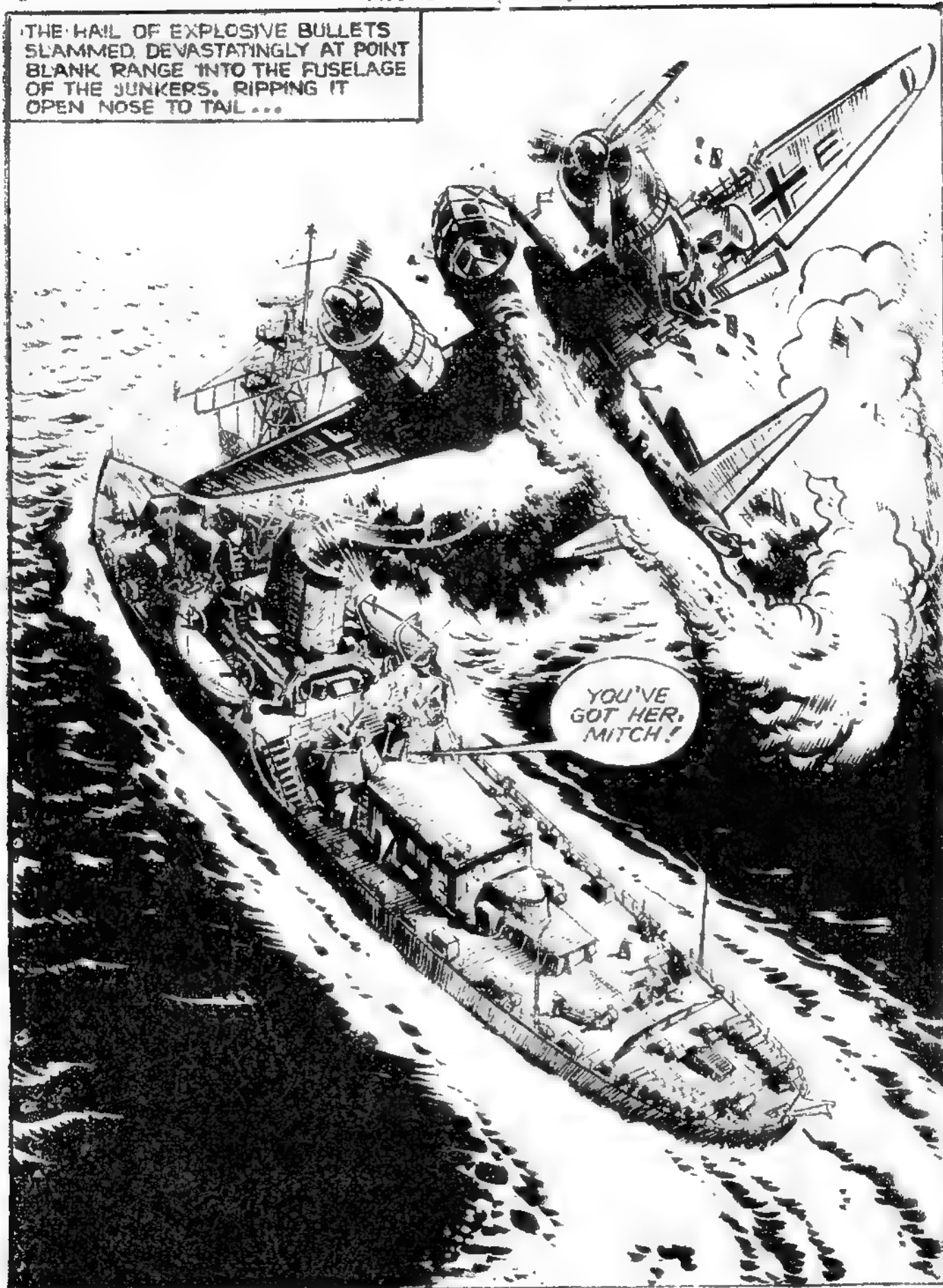


THE JUNKERS CAME IN BOLDLY AT MAST HEIGHT. NOW IT WAS IN RANGE. STILL MITCH HELD HIS FIRE. THEN, AS THE GREAT BELLY OF THE AIRCRAFT SWUNG INTO HIS SIGHTS...

THAT'S ONE FOR CROCKING OUR KILICK, JERRY!



THE HAIL OF EXPLOSIVE BULLETS
SLAMMED DEVASTATINGLY AT POINT
BLANK RANGE INTO THE FUSELAGE
OF THE JUNKERS, RIPPING IT
OPEN NOSE TO TAIL...



MORTALLY STRICKEN, THE GERMAN AIRCRAFT STAGGERED AND FELL, CLAWED OUT OF THE AIR BY A SINGLE DEADLY BURST OF FIRE. IT HIT THE SEA ON THE *WHIP*'S QUARTER AND EXPLODED.

PREW! YOUNG MITCHELL BELIEVES IN WAITING TILL HE SEES THE WHITES IN THEIR EYES! SET COURSE FOR GIB NOW, NUMBER ONE, AND CONGRATULATE THAT YOUNGSTER FOR ME!



L'EUTENANT COMMANDER POWYS GRINNED. HE HAD A GOOD SHIP AND A GOOD CREW. HE WAS READY FOR WHATEVER ORDERS THE ADMIRALTY HAD FOR HIM AT GIBRALTAR.

NICE SHOOTING, MITCHELL!

IT WAS A PLEASURE, SIR. THAT SO-AND-SO GOT LEADING SEAMAN EDWARDS... WE WERE JUST GOING BELOW TO SEE HOW BAD HE IS.



The Call of Duty

UNMOVED BY HIS SUCCESS, A.B. JIM MITCHELL HAD SOMETHING ELSE ON HIS MIND NOW ... THE WOUNDED LEADING SEAMAN EDWARDS BELOW...



THE WHIP'S STARBOARD WATCH HAD BEEN A HAPPY AND EFFICIENT ONE UNDER THE POPULAR KILICK. MITCH AND PORKY WERE GLOOMILY SILENT AS THEY CAME OUT OF THE SICK BAY.



THERE WAS SOMETHING MITCH COULD DO NOW TO TAKE HIS MIND OFF HIS WOUNDED SHIPMATE. WITH A POT OF PAINT FROM THE CHIPPY'S SHACK, THE YOUNG A.B. CLIMBED AGAIN TO THE OERLIKON PLATFORM.



MITCH'S TALLY SHOWED THE AIRCRAFT HE HAD SHOT DOWN, THE THREE TORPEDO BOATS HE HAD SUNK, AND THE SHORE BATTERY HE HAD SILENCED IN A NIGHT ACTION OFF BENGHAZI. THIS WAS DONE AGAINST ORDERS, BUT...

MITCHELL'S STILL DISFIGURING YOUR PAINTWORK, CHIEF.

HE'S A GOOD YOUNG 'UN, SIR. HE CAN COVER THE SHIP WITH TALLYS AS LONG AS HE KEEPS SHOOTING 'EM DOWN. THERE'S A TIME TO BE PUSSER, SIR... AND A TIME NOT TO BE!

THE SHIP'S OFFICERS TURNED A BLIND AND AMUSED EYE ON THIS INFRINGEMENT OF NAVAL REGULATIONS. IT WAS A SMALL SHIP, MEN AND OFFICERS WERE COMRADES, NOT COGS IN AN INHUMAN MACHINE. SO, UNMOLESTED BY AUTHORITY, MITCH WENT BELOW TO TURN IN.

I GOT THE BUZZ FROM SPARKS, PORKY. IT'S GIB AGAIN! RECKON WE'LL BE GETTING OUR NEW KILICK TOMORROW!



Chapter 2. THE NEW KILLICK

ALL THAT NIGHT, THE *WHIP* STEAMED EAST TOWARDS GIBRALTAR. AT DAWN, THE GREAT ROCK LOOMED UP FROM THE HORIZON AND THE LITTLE SHIP HEADED IN TO FULFIL HER VIOLENT DESTINY.



CURIOUS EYES WATCHED THE SHABBY LITTLE *WHIP* AS SHE STEAMED PAST THE BATTLESHIP *TYRANT*. CRITICAL EYES... THE EYES OF A YOUNG R.N. RATING, KEITH BARTLETT...

JUST LOOK AT HER! TALK ABOUT A TRAMP!

AH WELL, KEITH BOY, HAPPEN THEY'VE BEEN TOO BUSY SINKING SUBS TO KEEP THEIR BRASSES SHINING!



HERE ON THE GREAT TYRANT, THE DISCIPLINE WAS STRICT AND IMPERSONAL. COMRADESHIP ALONE COULD NOT HOLD TOGETHER A CREW OF MORE THAN A THOUSAND MEN. AND TO KEITH BARTLETT SUCH DISCIPLINE WAS NATURAL AND RIGHT.



KEITH WAS A BIG SHIP MAN. HE FITTED SMOOTHLY INTO THAT RIGID FRAMEWORK OF DUTY. AND NOW HIS CHANCE HAD COME NOT MERELY TO ACCEPT THAT DISCIPLINE, BUT TO ENFORCE IT.



BUT CLOSE BEHIND KEITH'S THRILL OF PLEASURE AT HIS PROMOTION WAS TO COME A FEELING OF A MORE DISTURBING KIND...

NOW, BARTLETT, YOUR NEW RATING MAKES YOU REDUNDANT ON THE *TYRANT*. YOU'RE BEING POSTED TO A FRIGATE. SHE'S IN GIB AT THIS MOMENT AND YOU JOIN HER AT ONCE. HER NAME IS... LET ME SEE... THE *WHIP*!

BUT...
AYE. AYE,
SIR!



KEITH SALUTED THE COMMANDER STIFFLY AND WENT TO COLLECT HIS GEAR. HE FELT SHAKEN... BUT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF SHOWING IT TO HIS SHIPMATE.

A FRIGATE, EH? HAPPEN THEY'LL BE ABLE TO TEACH YOU SOMETHING ABOUT LITTLE SHIPS NOW, KILICK!

AND
MAYBE I'LL
TEACH THEM
SOMETHING!



ON THE BRIEF TRIP TO THE QUAYSIDE, THE YOUNG KILICK WONDERED HOW HE WOULD FIT INTO THE UNFAMILIAR ROUTINE OF AUTHORITY ON A SMALL SHIP. GRIMLY DETERMINED, HE SEARCHED AMONGST THE WARSHIPS CROWDED IN THE BASIN. THEN HIS HEART SANK ...

IT CAN'T BE...
OH GOSH, IT'S THAT
OLD TRAMP I SAW
THIS MORNING!
OH, WELL! H.M.S.
WHIP, HERE
I COME!



THE *WHIP* WAS CERTAINLY AN EVIL SIGHT. CABLE SNAKED OVER HER LITTERED DECKS, OXY-ACETYLENE TORCHES HAD BURNED RED PATCHES ON HER SCARRED HULL. FROWNING DISGUSTEDLY, LEADING SEAMAN KEITH BARTLETT WENT ABOARD.

WOTCHER, MATE. YOU'RE
THE NEW KILICK, AREN'T
YOU? I'M IN YOUR WATCH.
SLING YOUR KITBAG DOWN
AND I'LL FIND THE
BUFFER FOR YOU!

THANKS!



KEITH FOLLOWED MITCH GRIMLY ALONG THE CLUTTERED DECK. SO THIS WAS DISCIPLINE ON A SMALL SHIP! HE HAD NEVER SPOKEN SO CASUALLY TO HIS KILLICK ON THE *TYRANT*. STILL, THE CHIEF BO'SUN'S MATE SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS FEELING.

THE *WHIP*'S A BIT DIFFERENT TO THE *TYRANT*, EH, BARTLETT? NEVER MIND, SHE'LL LOOK MORE SHIPSHAPE WHEN THE DOCKYARD MATEYS HAVE TAKEN THEIR CLOBBER ASHORE.

I SUPPOSE SHE WILL. AND IT'S TOMORROW WE'RE SAILING, CHIEF. ISN'T IT?



MITCH, MEANWHILE, HAD SHREWDLY SIZED UP THE NEW LEADING HAND...

HE'S REAL PUSSEY, I TELL YOU! BIG SHIPS IS WRITTEN ALL OVER HIM! NO MORE SWINGING THE LEAD FOR US, MATES!

STOW IT... HERE HE COMES WITH THE BUFFER NOW!



AND THE YOUNG A.B. WAS RIGHT! AT DAWN NEXT MORNING, THE NEW KILLICK'S SHARP AND UNFAMILIAR VOICE BROUGHT THE BLEARY HEADS ABRUPTLY FROM THEIR HAMMOCKS.



KEITH WAS DETERMINED TO ENFORCE THE AUTHORITY THE NAVY HAD VESTED IN HIM RIGHT FROM THE START. HIS MIND MIGHT STILL BE UNCERTAIN, BUT HIS VOICE WAS HARSH.



The Call of Duty

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, ON THE BRIDGE, THE SKIPPER GAVE A QUIET ORDER. DOWN IN THE ENGINE ROOM THE DIALS QUIVERED. THE *WHIP* WAS READY FOR SEA.



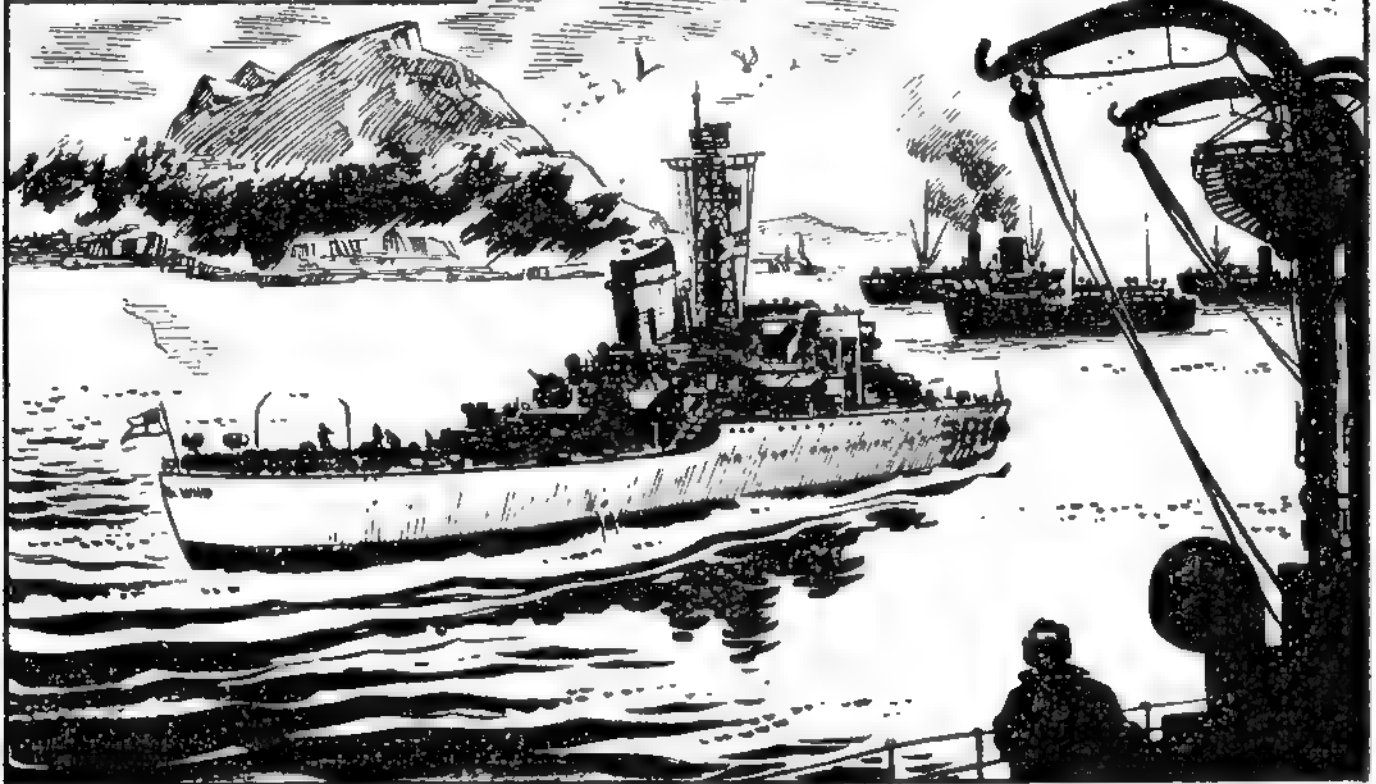
IN THE WHEELHOUSE, THE COXSWAIN SHIFTED THE WHEEL UNDER HIS HANDS, HIS EYES ON THE ILLUMINATED COMPASS AS THE SKIPPER CONNED THE FRIGATE INTO THE ROAD-STEAD. AT LAST SHE WAS CLEAR...

FULL AHEAD
BOTH ENGINES!
MIDSHIPS!

MIDSHIPS,
SIR!



THE RUMOURS WHICH HAD SPREAD THROUGH THE *WHIP*'S MESSDECKS DURING THE PAST TWENTY FOUR HOURS WERE SETTLED. SHE WAS JOINING THE ESCORT OF A MALTA BOUND CONVOY ...



TWO HOURS LATER, AS THE FRIGATE TOOK UP STATION ON THE BEAM OF THE CONVOY, THE OMINOUS ORDER CAME! AND DANGER OF ANOTHER KIND WAS IN THE OFFING FOR A.B. JIM MITCHELL.



BUT NOW, IN THE ASDIC CABIN OF THE FRIGATE, A TELL-TALE SPECK STARRED THE GLOWING GREEN CIRCLES OF THE RADIO BEAM...



IN THOSE TREACHEROUS WATERS, AN ASDIC CONTACT COULD MEAN ONLY ONE THING ... A U-BOAT LURKING HUNGRILY UNDER THE SURFACE!





THE DEPTH CHARGES HAD FORCED THE U-BOAT TO THE SURFACE. BUT IN THAT DESPERATE BATTLE OF THE HIGH SEAS, NO QUARTER WAS GIVEN.

I'M GOING TO
RAM HER!
STAND BY!



AT TWENTY TWO KNOTS, THE *WHIP* BORE DOWN ON THE CRIPPLED SUBMARINE. FROM THE OERLIKON PLATFORM THE TENSE MITCH SAW THE CONNING TOWER OPEN. GRIMLY HE SWUNG THE WICKED BARREL OF THE OERLIKON DOWNWARDS.

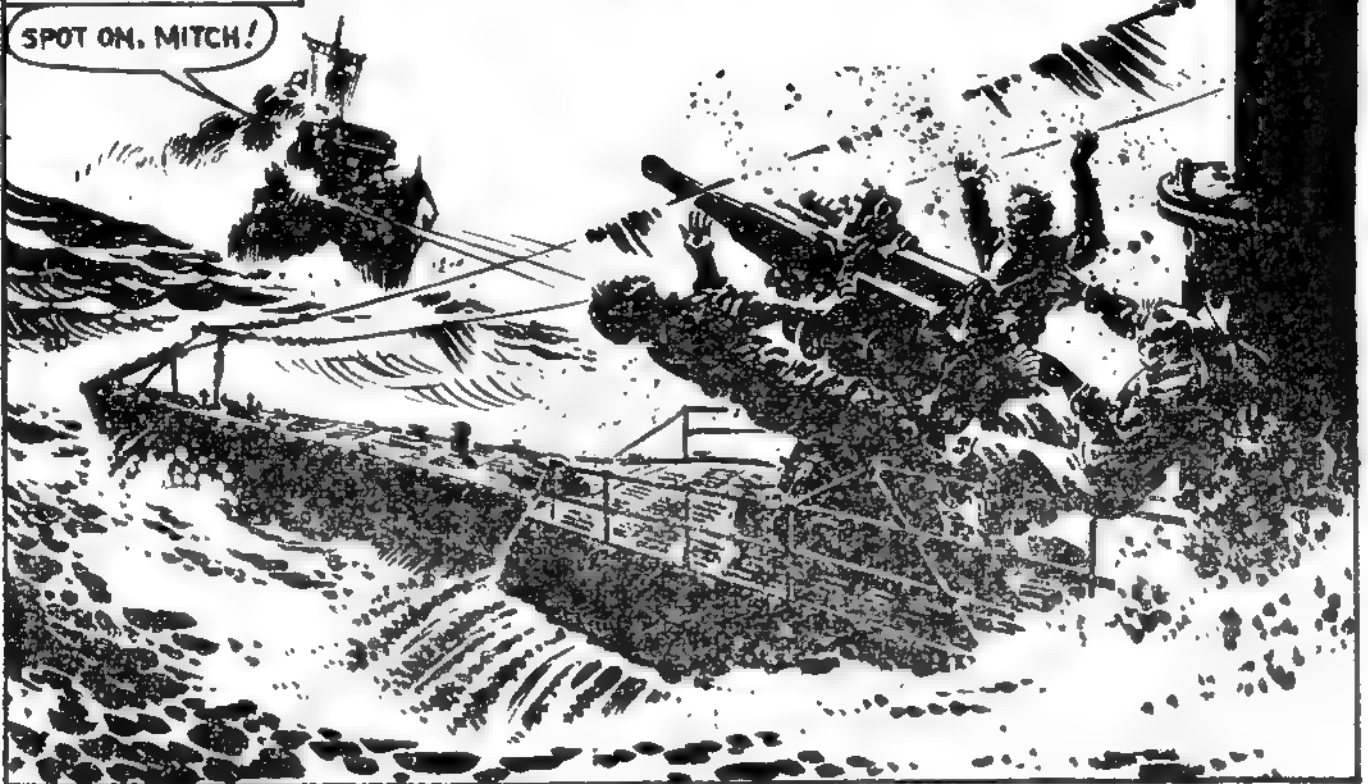
THEY'RE GOING
TO FIRE ON US!

NOT IF
I CAN HELP
IT!



THE GUN ON THE U-BOAT'S GLISTENING DECK WAS CAPABLE OF DEALING A VICIOUS BLOW AT THE VULNERABLE SUPERSTRUCTURE OF THE FRIGATE. BUT MITCH WAS NOT PARTICULAR ABOUT HIS TARGET... SO LONG AS HE HIT THE ENEMY!

SPOT ON, MITCH!



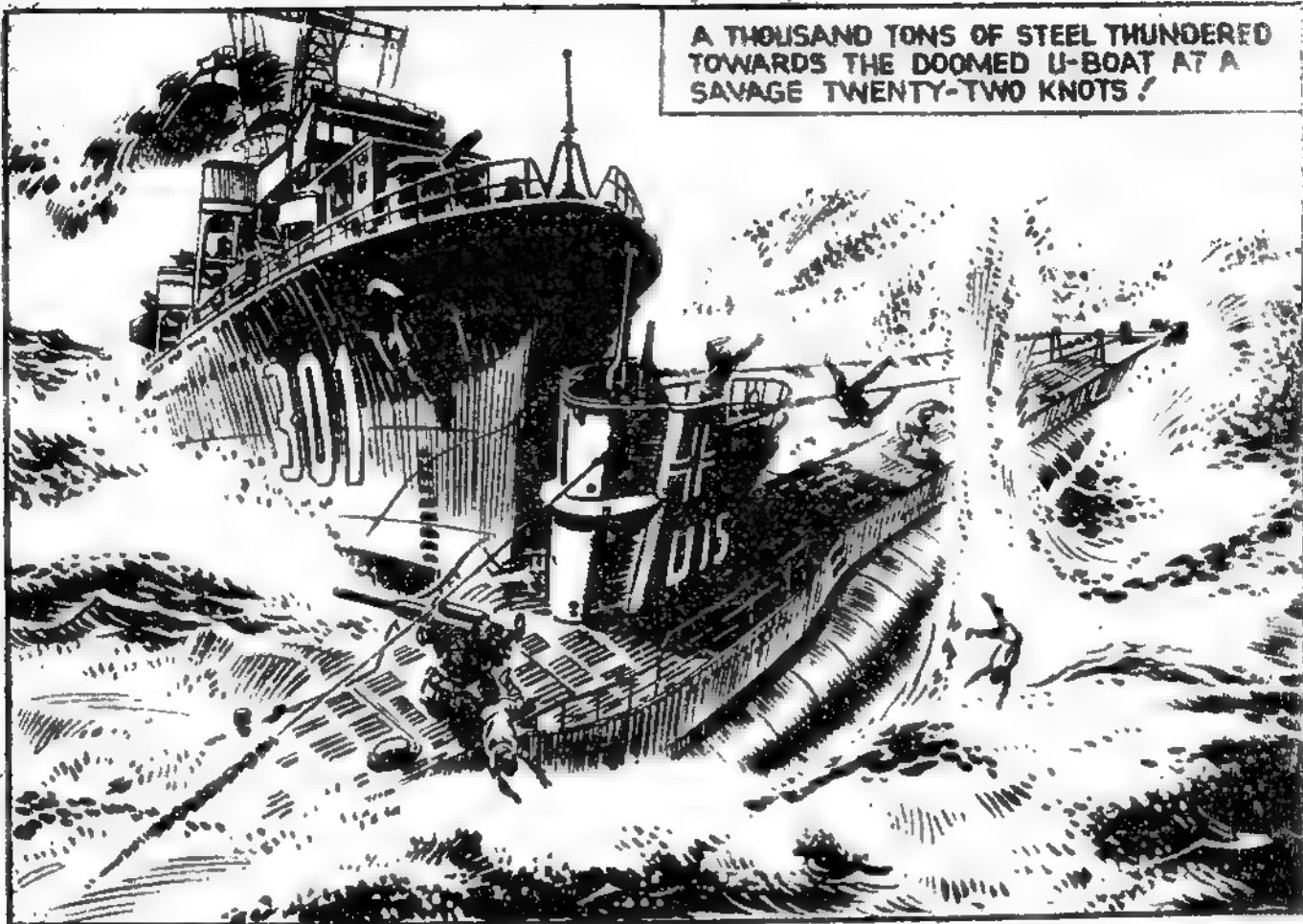
MITCH'S CONTROLLED OERLIKON BURST SWEEPED THE DECK OF THE U-BOAT WITH FLYING LEAD AS THE *WHIP* CLOSED WITH HER TREACHEROUS ENEMY. THE GERMAN GUN CREW WERE HURLED ASIDE AS THOUGH BY A GIANT HAND.

THAT WAS MITCHELL, SIR. HE'S SILENCED THEIR GUN!

GOOD MAN! NOW... STAND BY TO RAM!



A THOUSAND TONS OF STEEL THUNDERED TOWARDS THE DOOMED U-BOAT AT A SAVAGE TWENTY-TWO KNOTS!



WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER IMPACT, THE KNIFE-SHARP BOWS BLUDGEONED INTO THE FLIMSY HULL OF THE U-BOAT. ITS PLATES GROANING, THE SUBMARINE ROLLED RIGHT OVER UNDER THE ONRUSHING FRIGATE....

THINK SHE'S HAD ENOUGH, NUMBER ONE!



THE U-BOAT'S BACK WAS BROKEN! BOWS AND STERN PIERCED THE SCARRED WATER FOR A BRIEF INSTANT BEFORE THE FINAL DEATH PLUNGE.



IMPRESSED, DESPITE HIMSELF, BY THE A.B.'S PROWESS WITH THE OERLIKON GUN, KEITH BARTLETT HAD CLIMBED TO THE GUN PLATFORM. WHAT HE SAW THERE MADE THE YOUNG DISCIPLINARIAN BLINK.

THAT'S HALF A SUB. I CAN ADD TO THE TALLY NOW, PORKY!

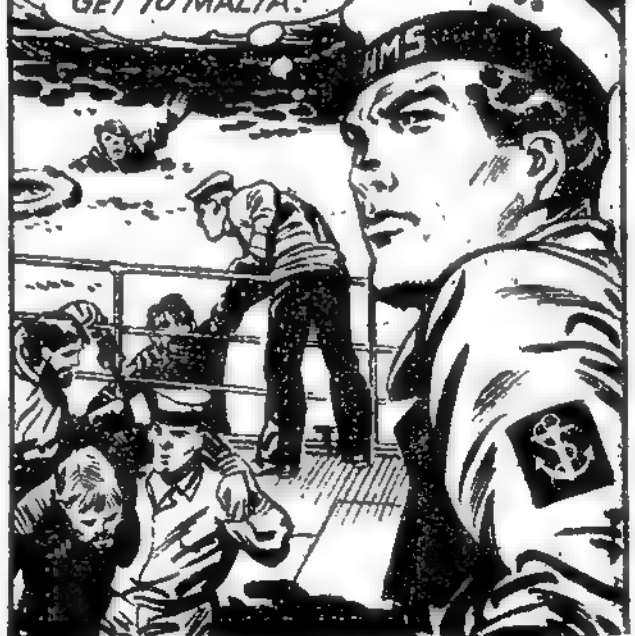
WHAT THE DEVIL...

STAND BY TO PICK UP SURVIVORS!



THERE WAS NO TIME NOW TO QUESTION THE IRREPRESSIBLE SEAMAN. ALREADY THE WHIP HAD PUT ABOUT TO SEARCH FOR THE SURVIVORS FROM THE WRECKED U-BOAT. BUT KEITH BARTLETT MADE A MENTAL NOTE...

THAT TALLY OF MITCHELL'S IS AGAINST REGULATIONS! I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT WHEN WE GET TO MALTA!



IN THE HOURS WHICH FOLLOWED, THE CONVOY CAME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK FROM THE AIR. MANY TIMES THE WHIP'S GUNS BLAZED IN ANGRY DEFIANCE. ONE MERCHANT SHIP WAS HIT AND SET ABLAZE, ANOTHER WAS TORPEDOED. THE OTHERS LIMPED ON TOWARDS MALTA...



Chapter 3. THE MISSING GUNNER

AT LAST, HER DECKS REEKING WITH CORDITE, HER CREW WEARY BUT UNDEFEATED, H.M.S. WHIP STEAMED SLOWLY INTO GRAND HARBOUR, VALETTA. ANOTHER PERILOUS JOB HAD BEEN DONE.

HALF
AHEAD BOTH!
MIDSHIPS!
WELL, WE MADE
IT, NUMBER
ONE!



ON THE OERLIKON PLATFORM, A. B. JIM MITCHELL CONTEMPLATED HIS TALLY WITH TIRED SATISFACTION. BUT AT THAT MOMENT, OTHER EYES WERE LOOKING AT IT WITH A GRIMMER MOTIVE...

THAT'S ANOTHER
TWO TO ADD,
PORKY, AS WELL
AS THAT HALF SUB!
I'LL NEED A NEW
BULKHEAD
SOON!



LEADING SEAMAN KEITH BARTLETT KNEW THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR A SHOWDOWN WITH THE YOUNG SEAMAN. THE NAVY HAD GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY, AND FOR THE GOOD OF THE SHIP HE WOULD USE IT!

ALL RIGHT, MITCHELL, YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH ROPE! I WANT THAT MESS ON THE BULKHEAD PAINTED OUT BEFORE HANDS ARE PIPED ASHORE! GET THAT?

WHAT ARE YOU CALLING A MESS? THAT'S MY TALLY!



MITCH WAS ANGRY AND REBELLIOUS. WHAT DID THIS STIFF-NECKED KILICK KNOW ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF A LITTLE SHIP, WITH HIS NAVAL REGULATIONS AND HIS RED TAPE?

I DON'T CARE WHAT IT IS, MITCHELL. IT'S AGAINST NAVY REGULATIONS. THERE'S GOING TO BE NO SLACKNESS IN MY WATCH! YOU'VE GOT YOUR ORDERS!



AN HOUR LATER, MITCH WAS DRESSED IN HIS NUMBER ONES READY FOR SHORE LEAVE. THE STARBOARD WATCH SAW THEIR LEADING HAND GO GRIMLY ON DECK. TROUBLE WAS BREWING...



PALE AND ANGRY, KNOWING INSTINCTIVELY WHAT HE WOULD FIND THERE, KEITH BARTLETT CLIMBED TO THE OERLIKON PLATFORM...





LIPS SET, KEITH 'BARTLETT' DRAGGED THE BRUSH ACROSS THE TALLY. A GUST OF ANGER CHOKED MITCH'S THROAT. BLINDLY HE LUNGED FORWARD...



IN THAT BRIEF MOMENT, UNTHINKINGLY, THE YOUNG SEAMAN HAD COMMITTED A CRIME ... AND ONE OF THE WORST IN KING'S REGULATIONS!



The Call of Duty

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HEATH-
SENT MITCH STERNLY BELOW
AND TURNED RESIGNEDLY
TO THE PALE-FACED SENIOR
RATING.

I SHOULDN'T SAY YOU ASKED
FOR THAT, BARTLETT...
BUT YOU DID!
THAT TALLY WAS
MITCHELL'S PRIDE
AND JOY!

MAYBE IT WAS,
CHIEF, BUT IT'S
AGAINST REGULATIONS!
IT'S OUR DUTY TO
ENFORCE DISCIPLINE,
ISN'T IT?

THE OLD NAVY MAN KNEW WHEN TO RIDE A MAN WITH DISCIPLINE AND WHEN
TO TURN A BLIND EYE. IT WAS A LESSON THE NEW LEADING HAND WOULD
LEARN IN TIME. BUT ALREADY THE DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE.

YOU'LL LEARN MORE ABOUT
DUTY AND DISCIPLINE WHEN
YOU'RE A BIT OLDER, BARTLETT.
I SUPPOSE YOU'LL PUT THE
BOY ON A CHARGE?

I'VE GOT TO, YOU KNOW.
THAT, CHIEF? THIS MAY BE
A LITTLE SHIP, BUT STRIKING
A SENIOR RATING IS
STILL A CRIME IN THE
NAVY!

THE AFFAIR WAS TOO SERIOUS NOW TO BE HUSHED UP. RELUCTANTLY THE CHIEF BO'SUN'S MATE WENT AFT TO SEE THE WHIP'S FIRST LIEUTENANT.

I HAVE TO REPORT A SERIOUS BREACH OF DISCIPLINE BY A JUNIOR RATING, SIR! A. B. MITCHELL!

MITCHELL, EH? OH WELL, TELL ME ABOUT IT AND I'LL SEE THE SKIPPER.



SLOWLY, ALMOST AGAINST THE WILL OF THESE BRAVE AND HUMANE MEN, THE MACHINERY OF JUSTICE WAS SET IN MOTION.

IT'S MITCHELL, SIR. APPARENTLY THE NEW LEADING HAND ORDERED HIM TO PAINT OUT THAT TALLY OF HIS AND HE REFUSED. HE STRUCK BARTLETT, TOO!

THE DEVIL HE DID! THAT'S TOO SERIOUS TO OVERLOOK! THOUGH DEUCE KNOWS WE'LL NEED MITCHELL ON THIS TOBRUK RUN OF OURS! THERE'S LIKELY TO BE PLENTY OF ACTION! CONFOUND THESE OVER-ZEALOUS BIG SHIP MEN!



THE FIRST STEP WAS TO BRING A.B. MITCHELL BEFORE THE FIRST LIEUTENANT AT A DEFAULTER'S PARADE. THE SKIPPER CONSIDERED ...AND SHOOK HIS HEAD.



WE SAIL AT DAWN TOMORROW, NUMBER ONE! THERE'LL BE NO TIME FOR DEFAULTERS WHILE WE'RE ONLOADING STORES FOR THE TOBRUK GARRISON. YOU'LL HAVE TO PUT MITCHELL IN THE CELLS UNTIL WE GET BACK TO MALTA!

THE YOUNG A.B. COULD HAVE BEEN SENT ASHORE TO THE NAVAL PRISON, BUT SUCH A COURSE WAS REPUGNANT TO LT. COMMANDER POWYS. MITCH MUST STAY ON BOARD THE *WHIP*... EVEN IF IT WAS IN THE CELLS!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE IN THE RATTLE ON THE OLD *WHIP*. STILL, I'D RATHER BE HERE THAN IN THE GLASSHOUSE!



WON'T BE FOR LONG MITCH, THE SKIPPER'LL SEE TO THAT!

Chapter 4. MITCH'S TALLY

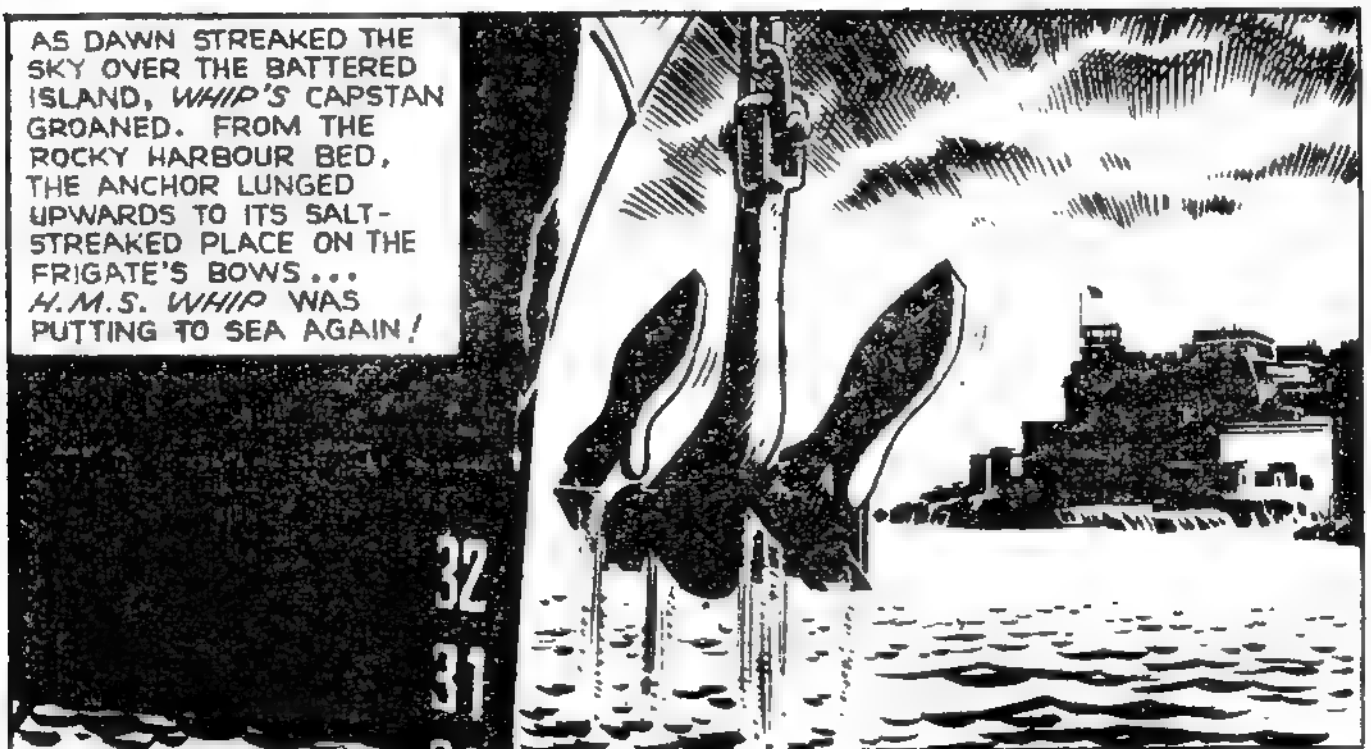
ALL THAT DAY AND FAR INTO THE NIGHT THE STORES FOR THE BESIEGED GARRISON AT TOBRUK WERE SWUNG ABOARD THE WAR-SCARRED FRIGATE IN PREPARATION FOR HER DANGEROUS MISSION.

THE BUZZ IS THAT WE'RE GOING TO TOBRUK, PORKY! THE JERRIES HAVE CUT IT OFF FROM MONTY'S LOT AND THE ONLY WAY TO GET SUPPLIES TO THE GARRISON IS FROM THE SEA. GOING TO BE A ROCKY TRIP, SO THE COX'N SAYS!

AND US WITHOUT OLD MITCH AT THE OERLIKON! EVEN JIMMY-THE-ONE'S CHOKKER ABOUT IT!



AS DAWN STREAKED THE SKY OVER THE BATTERED ISLAND, *WHIP'S* CAPSTAN GROANED. FROM THE ROCKY HARBOUR BED, THE ANCHOR LUNGED UPWARDS TO ITS SALT-STREAKED PLACE ON THE FRIGATE'S BOWS... *H.M.S. WHIP* WAS PUTTING TO SEA AGAIN!



GATHERING SPEED, *WHIP* HEADED FOR THE OPEN SEA. ON THE FORWARD DECK, YOUNG KEITH BARTLETT NOTICED THE BLACK LOOKS CAST AT HIM BY THE CAPSTAN PARTY. HIS JAW JUTTED BELLIGERENTLY...

THE FOOLS ARE STILL CHOKER WITH ME! DON'T THEY SEE I HAD TO DO IT? DISCIPLINE... THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE A FIGHTING SHIP EFFICIENT! WELL, THEY'LL BREAK BEFORE I DO!



KEITH REGRETTED THE TROUBLE AS MUCH AS MITCH'S FRIENDS, BUT HE HAD SEEN IT AS HIS DUTY TO DISCIPLINE THE YOUNG A.B. AND LEADING SEAMAN BARTLETT R.N. WOULD DO HIS DUTY AT ANY COST... INCLUDING THE SCOWLS WHICH DOGGED HIM IN THE HOURS WHICH FOLLOWED. THEN...

AIRCRAFT
STARBOARD BEAM!

HERE THEY COME,
NUMBER ONE!
AND FIFTY SEA MILES
TO TOBRUK! ACTION
STATIONS! GUN
CREWS CLOSE UP!



THE BOMBERS WERE ITALIAN. THEY CAME IN FROM THE STARBOARD BEAM, UGLY AND MENACING IN THE PEACEFUL SKY. ON THE GERLIKON GUN PLATFORM...

WELL, HERE GOES, LOFTY! BUT I AIN'T NO MITCH, AND I KNOW IT!

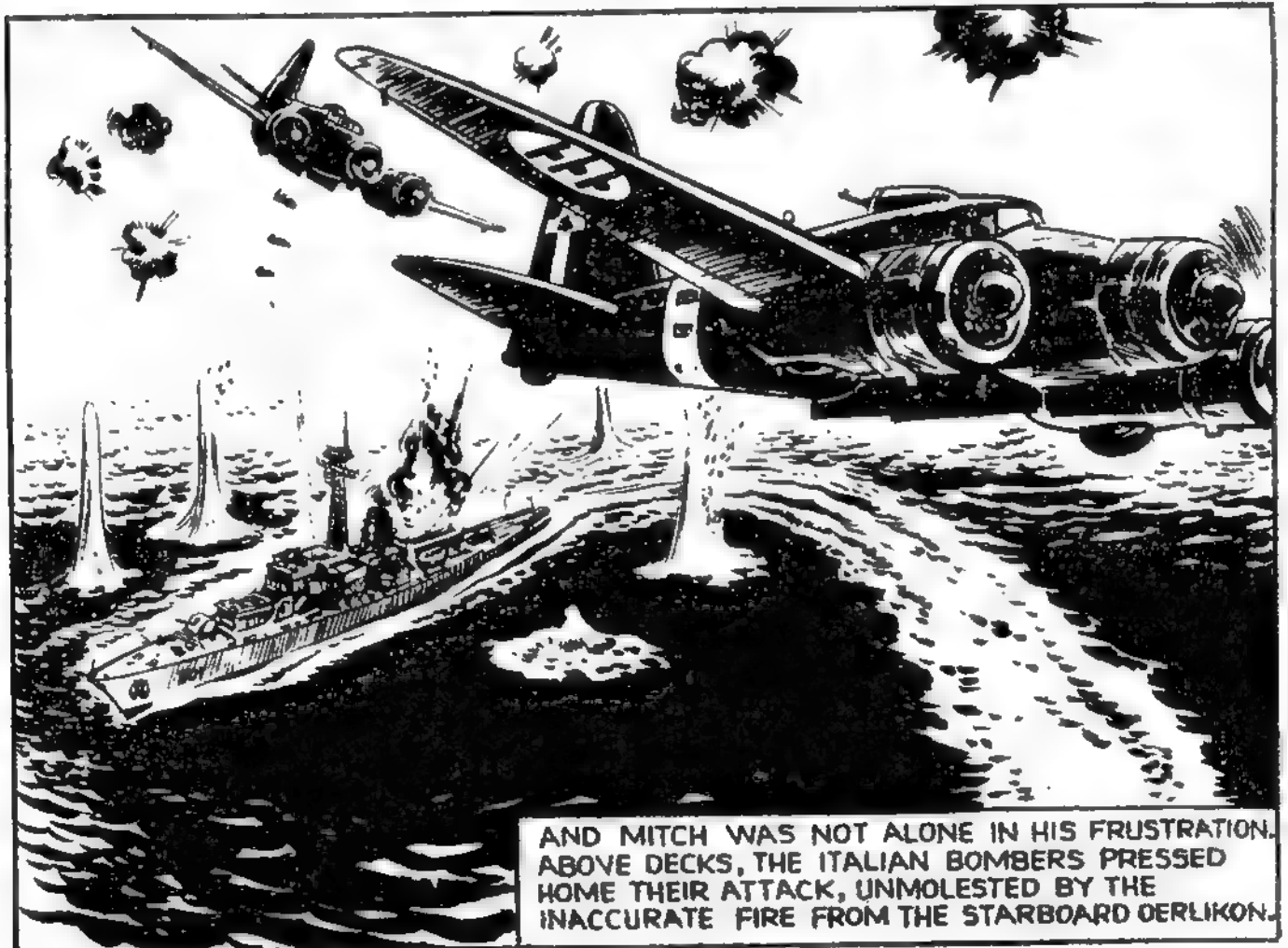
THE GUN FELT HEAVY UNDER PORKY'S NERVOUS HANDS. IN THAT TENSE MOMENT, BEFORE THE TARGET CAME INTO HIS SIGHTS, HE WISHED IT HAD BEEN MITCH THERE, IN HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE.

MILES WIDE... OH, CRIPES!



THE FIERCE CLATTER OF THE OERLIKON REACHED THE CELL BELOW DECKS AS A FAINT TREMOR IN THE STEEL PLATES, BUT IT WAS ENOUGH TO AROUSE THE IMPRISONED GUNNER TO A FURY OF FRUSTRATION!

LET ME OUT! LET ME GET TO MY GUN! GIVE ME A CHANCE TO FIGHT, DARN YOU!



AND MITCH WAS NOT ALONE IN HIS FRUSTRATION. ABOVE DECKS, THE ITALIAN BOMBERS PRESSED HOME THEIR ATTACK, UNMOLESTED BY THE INACCURATE FIRE FROM THE STARBOARD OERLIKON.

ONLY MAGNIFICENT SHIP-HANDLING BY THE SKIPPER SAVED THE *WHIP* FROM A DREADFUL MAULING AS THE SECOND BOMBER CAME IN. ALREADY FIRES WERE RAGING IN THREE PLACES, AND ANOTHER ATTACK WAS COMING...

I'M BEGINNING TO MISS YOUNG MITCHELL ON THAT OERLIKON, SIR!

SO AM I, NUMBER ONE! WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT WHEN WE GET TO TOBRUK, REGULATIONS OR NO REGULATIONS!



MITCH'S COOL AND BELLIGERENT GUNNERY WAS BEING MISSED BY EVERYONE ON BOARD. EVEN KEITH BARTLETT, FACING THE SEARING FLAMES ON THE QUARTER DECK WITH GRITTED TEETH, FELT A SUDDEN KEEN REGRET.

THEY'RE GOING!
THE EYTIES
ARE GOING!



The Call of Duty

THEIR RACKS EMPTY, THE BOMBERS DWINDLED INTO THE EASTERN SKY. A TWENTY KNOT BREEZE FANNING THE FLAMES ON HER UPPER DECK, THE *WHIP* SAILED ON.



DISTURBED BY THE GRIZZLED CHIEF'S WORDS, LEADING SEAMAN KEITH BARTLETT WRESTLED WITH HIS CONSCIENCE.

I MUSTN'T GET
SOFT! EVEN IF A
MAN CAN HANDLE
A GUN HE'S GOT TO
OBEY REGULATIONS
AND IT'S MY
JOB TO SEE
THAT HE DOES!
STILL...



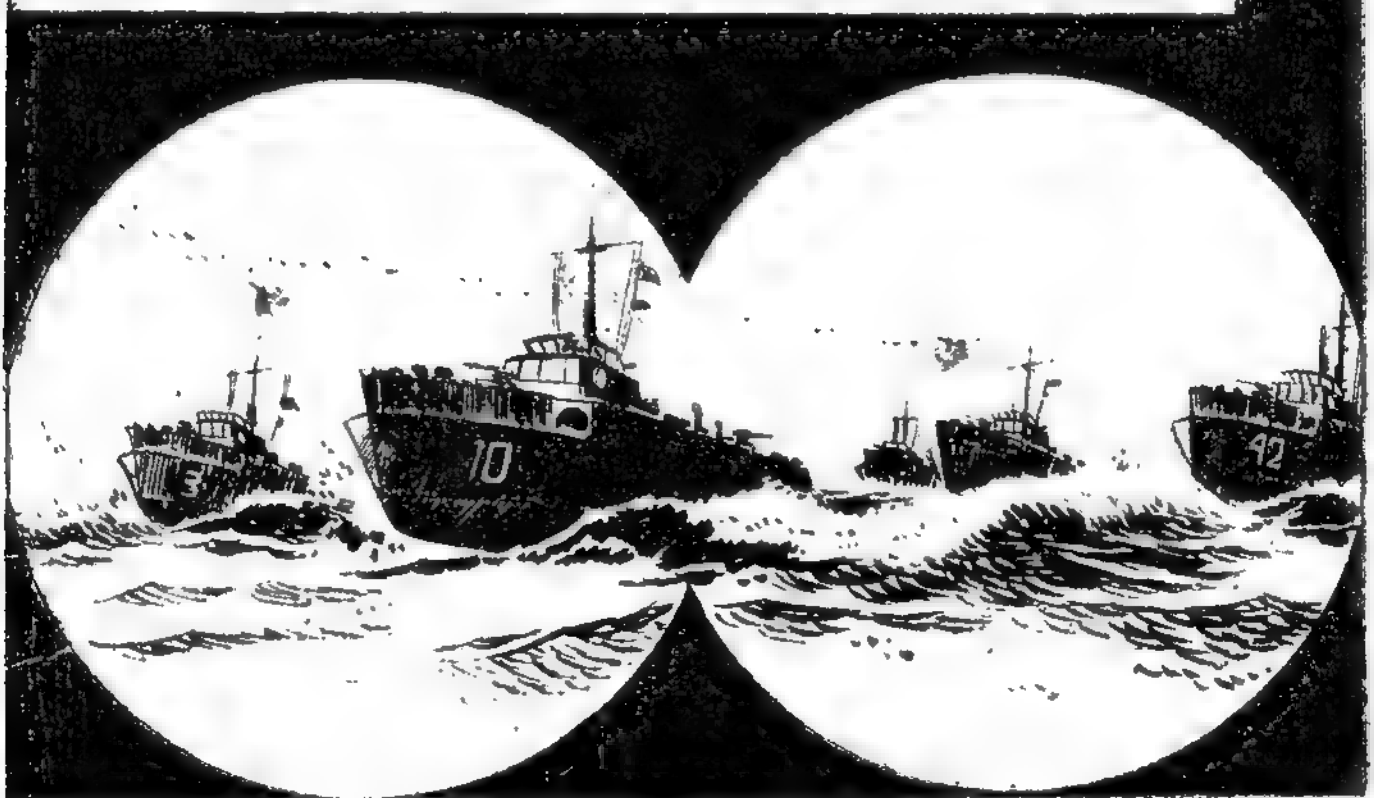
HAD HE BEEN WRONG TO RIDE A.B. MITCHELL? HAD THEY TAUGHT HIM ALL THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT DISCIPLINE ON BOARD THE GIANT *TYRANT*? NOW, AS THE FLAMES DIED DOWN ON THE *WHIP*'S SCARRED DECKS, KEITH BARTLETT HAD DOUBTS ...

ALL FIRES UNDER CONTROL, SIR!

GOOD SHOW, NUMBER ONE! WE'LL BERTH AT TOBRUK INSIDE THE HOUR!

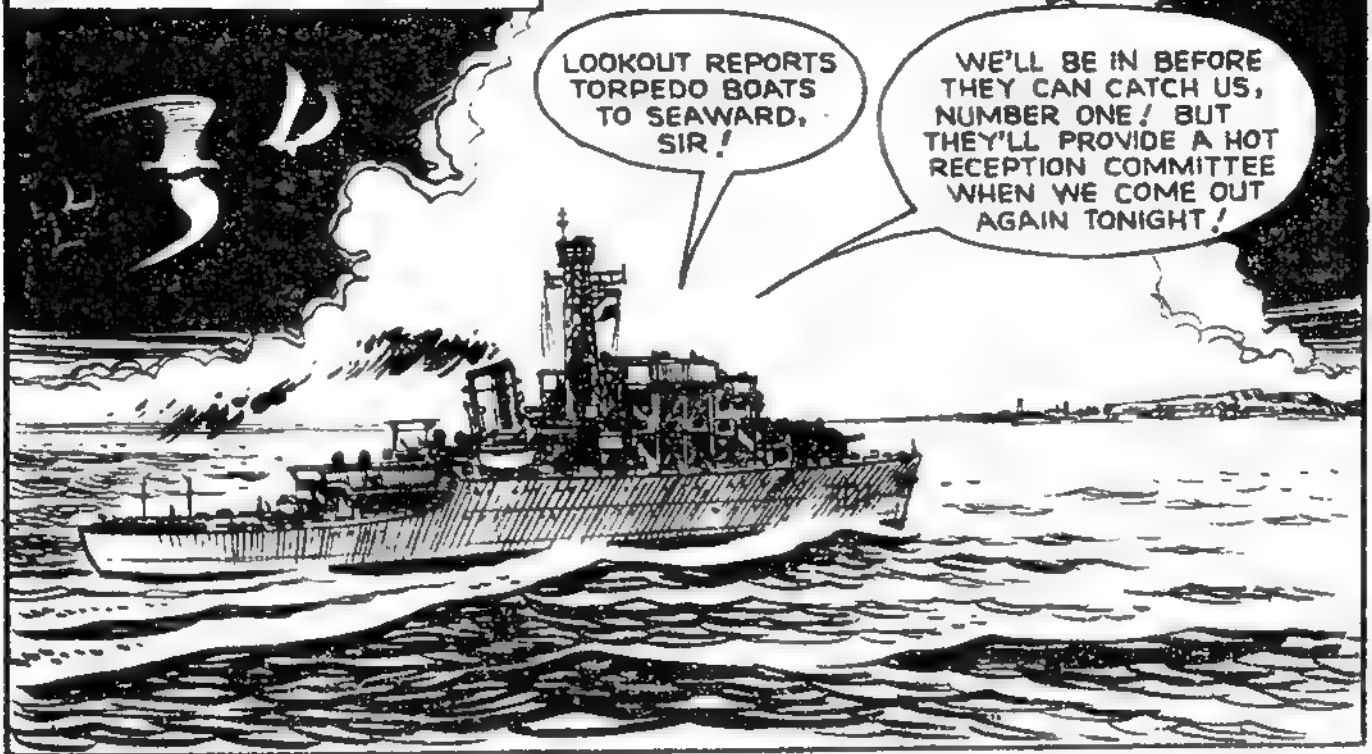


SLASHING THROUGH THE CALM SEA, THE *WHIP* RACED THROUGH THESE ENEMY INFESTED WATERS FOR TOBRUK. KEEN EYES SCANNED THE HORIZON. SUDDENLY THE LOOKOUT ON THE STARBOARD WING STIFFENED...



The Call of Duty

HULL DOWN, HEADING FOR THE *WHIP* AT HIGH SPEED, WAS A FLOTILLA OF ENEMY TORPEDO BOATS. A NET OF STEEL WAS CLOSING AROUND THE BLOCKADE-RUNNING FRIGATE.



ALREADY THE SHATTERED HARBOUR OF TOBRUK WAS IN SIGHT. THE *WHIP* HAD CARRIED OUT HER MISSION, THOUGH HER RETURN JOURNEY WOULD BE A DESPERATE ONE.



ALL THAT DAY THE SWEATING SAILORS OFFLOADED THE STORES AND AMMUNITION FOR THE BELEAGUERED GARRISON. THE WORK ALMOST DONE, THEIR THOUGHTS TURNED FOREBODINGLY TO THE ENEMY SHIPS AWAITING THEM OUTSIDE THE HARBOUR.



WELL, THAT'S GOT THE PONGO'S GRUB ASHORE! COR, MITCH IS IN THE BEST PLACE THIS TRIP!

YOU SHUT YOUR MOUTH, LOFTY! YOU'RE GOING TO WISH MITCH WAS ON THAT OERLIKON WHEN WE RUN FOR IT THROUGH THOSE TORPEDO BOATS TONIGHT!

KEITH BARTLETT HAD BEEN THINKING, TOO. UNEASILY...



CHIEF, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT MITCHELL...

HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS, BARTLETT? WELL, IT'S TOO LATE, NOW!

SKIPPER WANTS YOU IN HIS CABIN, BARTLETT, AT THE DOUBLE!

WONDERING, THE YOUNG LEADING SEAMAN MADE HIS WAY TO THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN. LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER POWYS LOOKED AT HIM COOLLY...

AT EASE, BARTLETT. YOU KNOW A STRONG ENEMY FORCE IS WAITING FOR US OUTSIDE THE HARBOUR? WE'LL NEED EVERY GUN TO GET THROUGH! NOW, THERE'S MITCHELL...

I KNOW, SIR. THE WHIP NEEDS HIM!



THE WORDS FORCED THEMSELVES OUT OF KEITH'S LIPS BEFORE HE HAD TIME TO THINK. THEY CAME FROM HIS HEART... AND THE SKIPPER SMILED!

I'M GLAD YOU FEEL THAT, BARTLETT! I WANTED YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHY I INTEND BREAKING REGULATIONS AND RELEASING MITCHELL TEMPORARILY. I THOUGHT YOU OUGHT TO BE THE MAN TO GO BELOW AND FREE HIM!



THANK YOU, SIR! I'LL BE GLAD TO!

WITH A STRANGE BUT LIVID RELIEF, KEITH HURRIED BELOW. HE DID NOT EVEN WONDER WHAT THE OFFICERS OF THE *TYRANT* WOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THIS BREACH OF NAVY REGULATIONS. HE WAS A SMALL SHIP MAN NOW, AND HE FELT LIKE ONE.

ALL RIGHT, 'MATE! I'VE GOT ORDERS FROM THE SKIPPER TO RELEASE MITCHELL PERSONALLY!



TAKING THE KEYS FROM THE GUARD, KEITH BURST OPEN THE DOOR OF MITCH'S CELL ... AND GASPED ...

THE
CRAZY FOOL!
HE'S BROKEN
SHIP



FOR A MOMENT THE YOUNG KILICK STOOD IRRESOLUTE. SHOULD HE REPORT MITCHELL'S NEW CRIME, THE MOST SERIOUS ONE OF ALL. IT WAS HIS DUTY TO... AND YET ...

WHAT'S UP,
KILICK?

NOTHING ...
MITCHELL'S NOT
TO BE DISTURBED
TILL I GET BACK!
THAT'S AN
ORDER!



KEITH BARTLETT HAD MADE UP HIS MIND. HE WOULD GO ASHORE AND BRING BACK THE CRAZY YOUNG A.B. WHAT THE *WHIP* NEEDED NOW WAS A DEADLY HAND ON A GUN, NOT A NEW CRIME ENTERED ON A CHARGE SHEET!

I'M GOING
ASHORE ON
CAPTAIN'S
BUSINESS!



The Call of Duty



LUCK WAS WITH THE LEADING HAND—SO FAR. IN THE SHADOWS OF THE WRECKED PILL BOX LURKED A STOCKY FIGURE IN A SOAKING BLUEJACKET'S UNIFORM.



HIS IMPRISONMENT HAD MADE THE BELLIGERENT YOUNG SEAMAN FIGHTING MAD! THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE OVERHEAD DURING THE ATTACK BY THE ITALIAN BOMBERS HAD DRIVEN HIM BEYOND THE POINT OF ENDURANCE.



MITCH HAD BROKEN SHIP
TO FIGHT, NOT TO RUN AWAY.
AND WILD HORSES WOULD
NOT DRAG HIM BACK!

I AIN'T
SKULKING IN ANY
FLAMING CELL WHILE
THERE'S FIGHTING TO
BE DONE! IF THEY
WON'T LET ME USE A
GUN ON THE WHIP,
THERE'S PLENTY'LL
GIVE ME ONE
HERE IN TOBRUK!



FACED BY THE REBELLIOUS RATING, KEITH BARTLETT SUMMONED UP ALL THE
AUTHORITY THE NAVY HAD GIVEN HIM WITH THE ANCHOR ON HIS LEFT ARM.

WE'LL
GIVE YOU
YOUR CHANCE,
MITCHELL. I'M
TELLING YOU TO
COME BACK, AND
THAT'S AN
ORDER! IT'S
ALSO YOUR
DUTY, MAN!

DUTY!
WHAT DO YOU
KNOW ABOUT
DUTY, BIG-SHIP
KILLICK?



MITCH'S ANSWER WAS A BITTER GIBE. THERE WAS ONLY ONE CHANCE LEFT TO KEITH, AND GRIMLY HE TOOK IT. THIS WAS NOT JUST AN ORDER. IT WAS A THREAT!

ALL RIGHT, SO I'LL HAVE TO USE THIS! GET MOVING, OR I'LL SHOOT!

SHOOT THEN! I'LL GO BACK TO THE WHIP, BUT I'LL GO BACK DEAD!

THE PISTOL GLINTED IN KEITH'S HAND FOR A LONG DEADLY MOMENT. THEN IT WAVERED...

I CAN'T SHOOT AND YOU KNOW IT, MITCHELL. STAY HERE, THEN! THE WHIP WILL HAVE TO SAIL WITHOUT YOU... AND FIGHT THOSE TORPEDO BOATS WITHOUT YOU, TOO... THOUGH HEAVEN KNOWS WE SHALL NEED EVERY MAN WHO CAN HANDLE A GUN!



The Call of Duty

DEJECTEDLY, THE YOUNG LEADING HAND TURNED AWAY. THE SUN WAS GOING DOWN FOR PERHAPS THE LAST TIME ON *H.M.S. WHIP*.

WELL, I'VE ORDERED HIM, THREATENED HIM! I'VE DONE MY BEST! IF A MAN WON'T OBEY AN ORDER TO DO HIS DUTY...



A.B. JIM MITCHELL WOULD NOT OBEY AN ORDER TO RETURN TO HIS SHIP, EVEN WHEN IT WAS GIVEN AT THE POINT OF A PISTOL. BUT...



INCREDULOUSLY, KEITH BARTLETT HEARD THE FIRM FOOTSTEPS BEHIND HIM. HE WHEELED ROUND. IT WAS MITCH, RETURNING TO HIS SHIP.

OKAY, KILICK ... I'M COMING BACK!

BUT WHY THE DEVIL ... ALL RIGHT, BELAY THE QUESTIONS! STAY WITH ME AND LET ME DO THE TALKING!





THERE WAS NO TIME TO ASK MITCH THE REASON FOR HIS CHANGE OF HEART. NOW KEITH MUST GET HIM BACK ON BOARD. LUCKILY, THE YOUNG GUNNER WAS A FAVOURITE WITH THE WHOLE CREW...

LEAVE THIS TO ME, JACK. YOU HAVEN'T SEEN MITCH COME ABOARD, GOT THAT?

IF YOU SAY SO, KILICK ... AND IF IT'LL HELP MITCH, HERE, I CAN'T SEE!

THE SENTRY ON THE GANGWAY GRINNED AT MITCH AND CLOSED HIS EYES. BUT DOWN IN THE COMPANIONWAY, OUTSIDE THE CELL THE ARMED RATING PROTESTED...

IT'S AGAINST REGULATIONS, KILICK!

ALL RIGHT, SO IT IS! BUT IF YOU WANT MITCHELL HERE FIGHTING WITH US WHEN WE GO OUT TONIGHT, YOU'LL KEEP QUIET ABOUT THIS!

WITHOUT THINKING, AND IMPATIENTLY, THE YOUNG LEADING SEAMAN BRUSHED ASIDE THE GUARD'S SCRUPLES. A FEW WEEKS ON THE *WHIP* HAD TAUGHT KEITH BARTLETT MORE ABOUT NAVY DISCIPLINE THAN THREE YEARS IN THE IMPERSONAL AND STRICTLY REGULATED WORLD OF *H.M.S. TYRANT*.

THE SKIPPER'S RELEASING YOU TO FIGHT YOUR GUN, MITCHELL! I FOUND YOU HERE WHEN I CAME TO FREE YOU! ALL RIGHT?

ALL RIGHT... AND THANKS, KEITH!



The Call of Duty

NOW, KEITH WAS TO LEARN HIS LAST LESSON ... AND THE SECRET OF THAT DEVOTION TO DUTY WHICH MAKES THE ROYAL NAVY THE FINEST FIGHTING FORCE IN THE WORLD!

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DECIDED TO COME BACK, MITCH. WHEN I ORDERED YOU TO DO YOUR DUTY...

COR, YOU ALWAYS USE SUCH BIG WORDS, KEITH! I DON'T KNOW ABOUT ORDERS OR DUTY ... BUT THE *WHIP'S* MY SHIP AND I AIN'T GOING TO DESERT HER WHEN YOU TELL ME SHE'S HEADING FOR TROUBLE!



NOT ORDERS, NOT THREATS ... BUT LOYALTY TO HIS SHIP, THAT IS WHAT MAKES THE BRITISH SAILOR FIGHT AGAINST WHATEVER ODDS TO THE DEATH.

REPORTING WITH ABLE SEAMAN MITCHELL, SIR!

THANK YOU, BARTLETT. NOW, MITCHELL, WE'LL FORGET THE TROUBLE FOR THE MOMENT AND PUT UP A GOOD FIGHT, SHALL WE?

READY TO SLIP, SIR!



AS THE WHIP STRAINED AGAINST HER MOORINGS, READY FOR THE FIGHT, MITCH CLIMBED WITH A LAST GRATEFUL WORD TO KEITH, TO HIS OWN GUN...



KEITH WENT AFT TO HIS POST AT THE DEPTH CHARGE THROWERS ON THE QUARTER-DECK. ON HIS WAY HE MET THE BUFFER...



AT LAST KEITH BARTLETT HAD FOUND HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE ON THE *WHIP*. WITH THE WHOLE CREW OF THE STURDY LITTLE SHIP, HE WAS READY FOR THE FIGHT AHEAD.



THROBBING TO THE BEAT OF HER POWERFUL SCREWS, THE *WHIP* SURGED OUT TOWARDS THE GERMAN TORPEDO BOATS WAITING LIKE RAVENING WOLVES ON THE OPEN SEA...



GROPING LIKE ICY FINGERS, THE ENEMY SEARCHLIGHTS LICKED TOWARDS THE *WHIP* OVER THE UNEASY SWELL. A MOMENT OF SUSPENSE ... THEN ...

THEY'VE PICKED US UP, MEN! NOW FOR IT!



THE *WHIP* WAS CAUGHT LIKE A MOTH IN THAT FIERCE GLARE! SIX TORPEDO BOATS WERE ALREADY FANNING OUT AROUND HER WHEN THE FLOTILLA LEADER RAPPED OUT HIS HARSH ORDER.

ACHTUNG! FLOTILLA ATTACK INDEPENDENTLY! I SHALL TAKE HER FROM THE STERN!



The Call of Duty

FROM THE *WHIP*'S QUARTER-DECK, KEITH BARTLETT SAW THE TORPEDO BOAT CLOSING RAPIDLY FROM ASTERN. IN ONE SPLIT SECOND HE HAD FORMED HIS PLAN... AND GIVEN HIS OWN ORDERS!

WE'VE NO ORDERS FROM THE BRIDGE TO USE DEPTH CHARGES, KILLUCK!

THAT SORT OF ORDER ISN'T NECESSARY ON A SMALL SHIP, JACK. YOU'RE EXPECTED TO USE YOUR LOAF! NOW, WE'LL USE A SHALLOW PATTERN... GET READY!

AT THE SHARP COMMAND FROM KEITH, THE FIRST DEPTH CHARGES HURTTLED MENACINGLY INTO THE AIR. BEYOND IT, THE GERMAN FLOTILLA LEADER LEAPED IN FOR THE KILL UNDER THE GLARE OF STAR SHELLS...

FIRE FOUR!



THE DEPTH CHARGES WERE SET TO DETONATE JUST UNDER THE SURFACE. TWO CANISTERS HAD ALREADY HIT THE WATER AND A THIRD FOLLOWED... DIRECTLY IN THE PATH OF THE ONRUSHING TORPEDO BOAT...



THE HAMMERBLOW EXPLOSION UNDER THE SURFACE SPLIT THE HULL OF THE TORPEDO BOAT LIKE AN EGG SHELL AND FLUNG IT UPWARDS IN A TORTURED GOUT OF FOAM. MEANWHILE ...

BARTLETT'S USING DEPTH CHARGES ON 'EM, SIR!

TARGET ON THE STARBOARD BEAM!



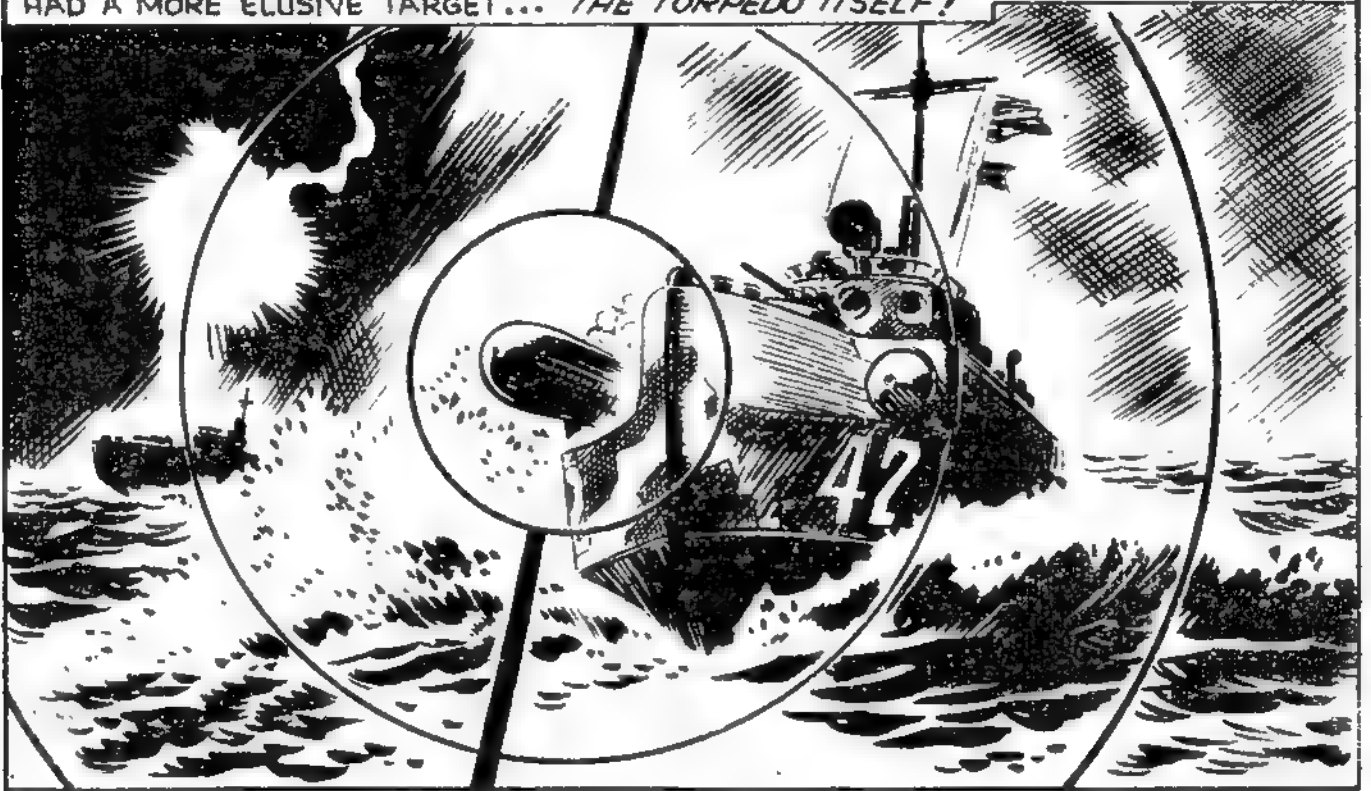
A SECOND ENEMY CRAFT WAS LUNGING IN ON THE STARBOARD BEAM. ON THE OERLIKON PLATFORM, PORKY GASPED A WARNING ...

CRIPES, GET 'IM, MITCH! I CAN SEE 'IS TIN FISH!

THAT'S WHAT I'M AFTER, PORKY... THE TORPEDO!



MITCH WAS READY. COOL AND POISED, HE KNEW THAT AN AIMLESS BURST OF FIRE AT THE BOAT WOULD NEVER STOP THAT TORPEDO FROM HITTING THE *WHIP*. HE HAD A MORE ELUSIVE TARGET... *THE TORPEDO ITSELF!*

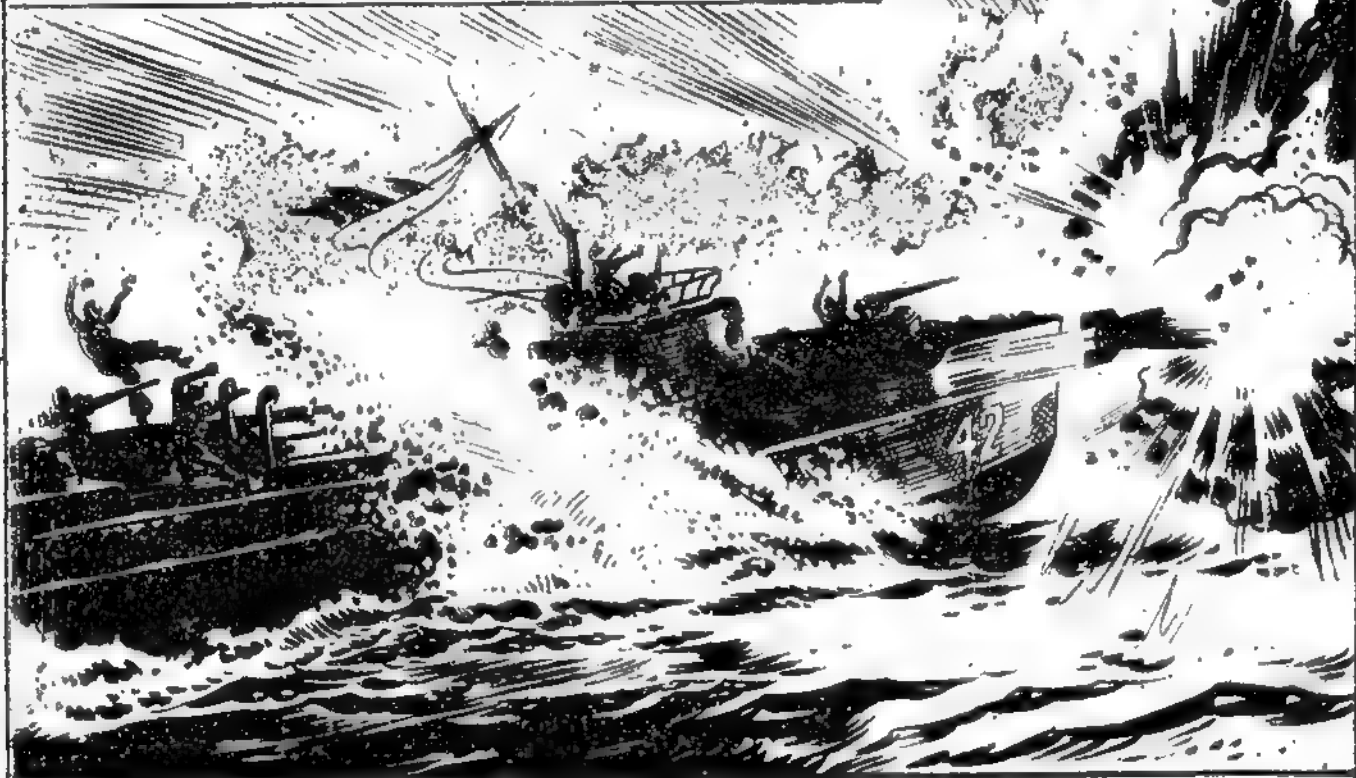


THIS WAS THE MOMENT WHICH KEITH BARTLETT HAD WON FOR HIM ... THE MOMENT IN WHICH THE LIVES OF EVERY MAN ABOARD THE *WHIP* RESTED IN THE HANDS OF ONE YOUNG ABLE SEAMAN...



The Call of Duty

COOLLY, MITCH CENTRED THE TORPEDO IN HIS SIGHTS! EVEN AS THE DEADLY MISSILE LEFT ITS GAPING TUBE, HE PRESSED THE FIRING BUTTON VICIOUSLY...



THE HAIL OF HEAVY BULLETS LASHED AGAINST THE TORPEDO'S WARHEAD. WITH ONE TREMENDOUS MID-AIR EXPLOSION IT DETONATED. THE TORPEDO BOAT WAS OBLITERATED IN A GLARE WHICH LIT THE WHIP'S BRIDGE...



THREE SUNK AND THE OTHERS ROUTED, SIR! NICE WORK BY MITCHELL AND THE NEW LEADING HAND!

NICE WORK ALL ROUND, NUMBER ONE. NOW SEND LEADING SEAMAN BARTLETT TO ME!

DISHEARTENED BY THE VIOLENT END OF THE FLOTILLA LEADER AND TWO COMPANION CRAFT, THE REMAINING TORPEDO BOATS FLED. AND ON THE TRIUMPHANT *WHIP*, A YOUNG LEADING SEAMAN REPORTED TO THE SKIPPER.

SO YOU THINK WE CAN COMPLETE A GOOD NIGHT'S WORK BY DROPPING ALL CHARGES AGAINST ABLE SEAMAN MITCHELL, EH, BARTLETT?

THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY CHARGES, SIR, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED!



STANDING AS STIFFLY TO ATTENTION AS ANY PUSSER BIG SHIP MAN, KEITH BARTLETT SEALED THE LESSON HE HAD LEARNED ON THE TINY AND WEATHER-STAINED DECKS OF *H.M.S. WHIP*. AND A WISE COMMANDING OFFICER WATCHED HIM GO APPROVINGLY.

A GOOD MAN THAT, SIR!

YES, NUMBER ONE. LEADING SEAMAN BARTLETT HAS A PROPER SENSE OF DUTY!



THE DAWN SUN ROSE NEXT DAY ON A SMALL AND BATTERED WARSHIP STEAMING DOGGEDLY THROUGH THE GREAT WATERS. AND ON ITS DECK, TWO MEN AND A PAINT POT ...

IT'S FOUR TORPEDO BOATS NOW, MITCH! DON'T BE SO MODEST!

AYE AYE, KILLICK!



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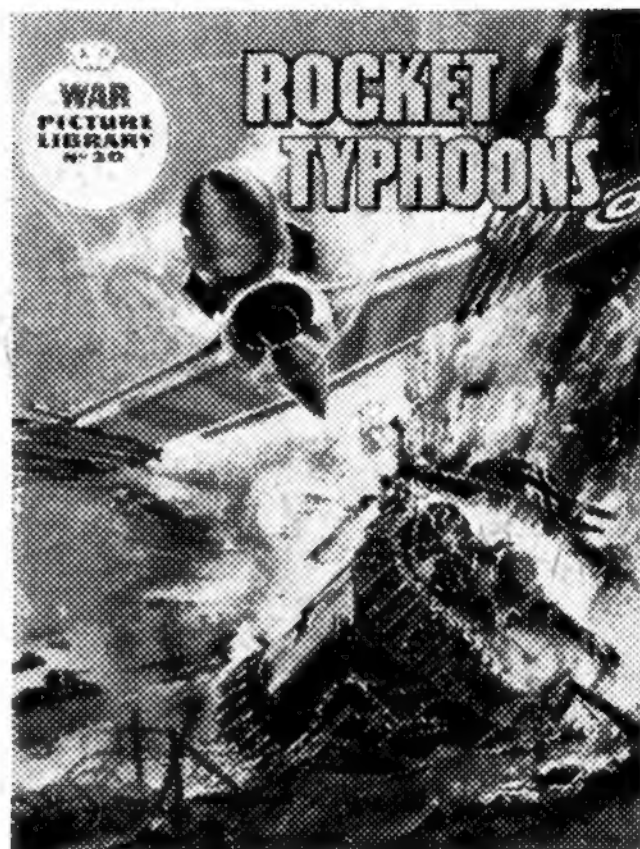
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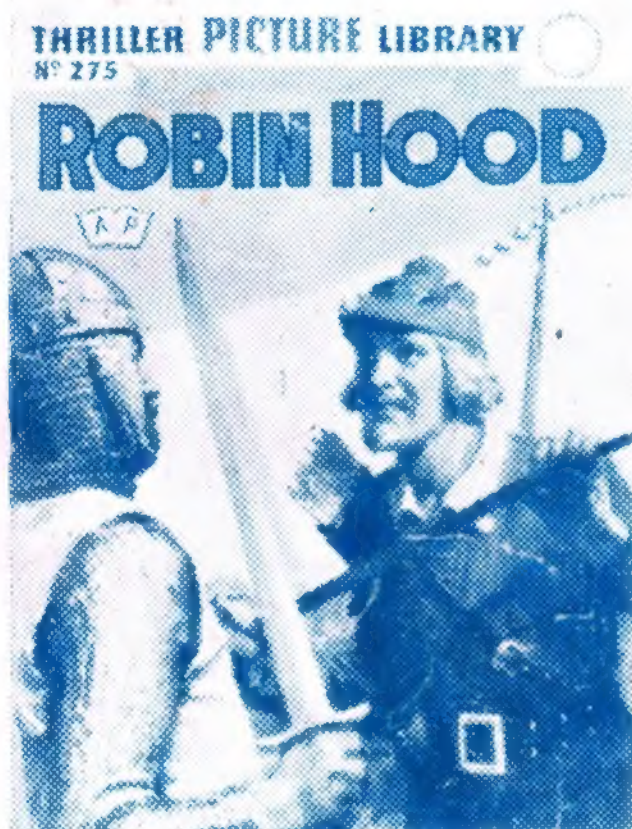
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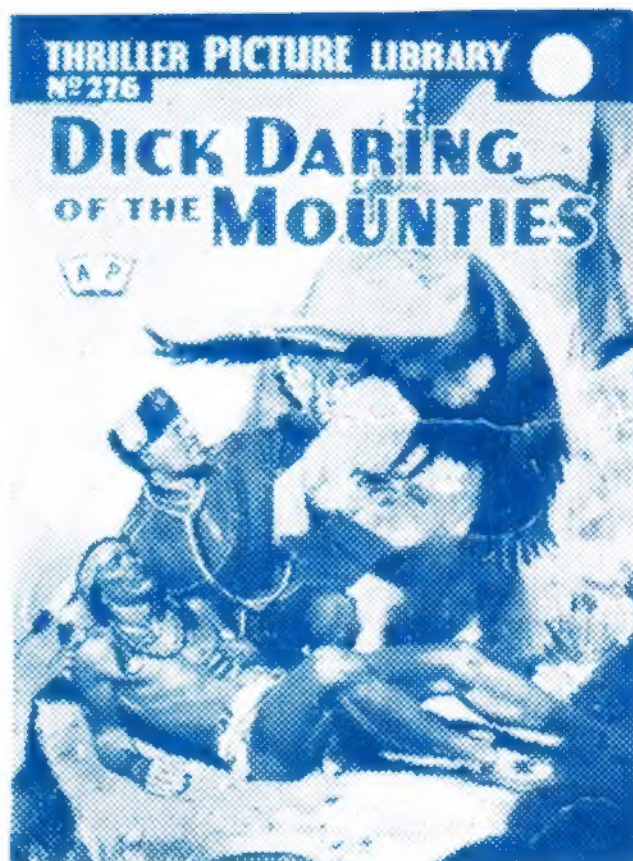
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